

## Spiritual Growth Through Study: Scripture

### I Introduction to the Course

We want our minds and hearts to be formed in the truth.

Jn. 8:31-32 RSV Jesus then said to the Jews who had believed in him, "If you *remain* in my word, you are truly my disciples,<sup>32</sup> and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."

This course will cover: 1) Scripture; 2) Tradition, especially the Fathers and Doctors of the Church; 3) works of the Magisterium.

### II Why We Learn the Scripture

"The sacred synod also earnestly and especially urges all the Christian faithful, especially Religious, to learn by frequent reading of the divine Scriptures the 'excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ' (Phil. 3:8). 'For ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ.'" *Dei verbum* 25

21. The Church has always venerated the divine Scriptures just as she venerates the body of the Lord, since, especially in the sacred liturgy, she unceasingly receives and offers to the faithful the bread of life from the table both of God's word and of Christ's body. She has always maintained them, and continues to do so, together with sacred tradition, as the supreme rule of faith, since, **as inspired by God and committed once and for all to writing, they impart the word of God Himself without change, and make the voice of the Holy Spirit resound in the words of the prophets and Apostles.** *Therefore, like the Christian religion itself, all the preaching of the Church must be nourished and regulated by Sacred Scripture. For in the sacred books, the Father who is in heaven meets His children with great love and speaks with them;* and the force and power in the word of God is so great that it stands as the support and energy of the Church, the strength of faith for her sons, the food of the soul, the pure and everlasting source of spiritual life. Consequently these words are perfectly applicable to Sacred Scripture: "For the word of God is living and active" (Heb. 4:12) and "it has power to build you up and give you your heritage among all those who are sanctified" (Acts 20:32; see 1 Thess. 2:13). "[T]he Sacred Scriptures contain the word of God and since they are inspired really are the word of God." *Dei verbum* 24

### III How to Learn the Scripture

Make the effort to read

Be consistent and realistic.

Use some kind of Bible reading plan that covers the whole of the Bible.

In order to understand the Scripture, two things are required: 1) attentive reading; 2) instruction.

The liturgy provides some broad interpretation.

Note the way the Sunday readings are put together

Use the Collect, Prayer over the Offerings, Preface, Antiphons to see how the liturgy ties the themes together.

The liturgy is built on a typological reading of the Bible, in which the NT is hidden in the OT and the OT is revealed in the NT. Paul says something really surprising for most Catholics. He says the OT was written for our instruction. (Rm 15:4; 1Co 10:11)

Use of commentaries and guides (see list). (I'll deal with the Fathers of the Church next time.)

### IV Meditation

The goal of meditation is not an experience so much as the pondering of the Lord's word, so that it can get inside us, forming our thoughts, attitudes, affections. In fact, one form of meditation is simply memorization.

*Lectio divina*: lectio (reading); meditatio (meditation); oratio (prayer); contemplatio (silent prayer).

"Prayer should accompany the reading of Sacred Scripture, so that God and man may talk together; for 'we speak to Him when we pray; we hear Him when we read the divine word.'" *Dei verbum* 25

## Scripture Study and Reading Resources

By no means an exhaustive list of resources, but a list of suggestions for reading and study. This is not an endorsement of everything you might find in any of these sources.

All are available on Amazon or other sites.

### Daily Reading Guides and Meditation Helps

Carmen Rojas, *How To Read The Bible Every Day: A Guide for Catholics*.

Daily Scripture Meditations <https://www.dailyscripture.net/daily-meditation/>

Peter Toon, *Meditating As A Christian*, also in HTML here

<http://assets.newscriptorium.com/toon-collection/meditation/meditchristian.htm>

### Commentary

Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture, edited by Mary Healey, Peter S. Williamson, Kevin Perotta – complete NT series, OT series to be produced

*Ignatius Study Bible* – 10 volumes so far, covering 15 books

Martin, George, *Opening The Scriptures Series* (commentaries on each of the gospels)

Reardon, Patrick Henry, short commentaries on individual books (Genesis, Numbers, Psalms, Job, 1-2 Chronicles, Sirach, Romans, Revelation). If you pray the Hours, *Christ In The Psalms* will help you enormously.

Ancient Christian Commentary – excerpts from the Fathers of the Church on every passage.

### Typological Reading

Clark, Stephen B., *Reading The OT In Light Of The NT*

Bouyer, Louis, *The Meaning Of Sacred Scripture*

Danielou, Jean, *The Bible And The Liturgy*

Michael Dauphinais and Matthew Levering, *Holy People, Holy Land*

### Historical Background

F.F. Bruce, *Israel And The Nations*

*New Testament History*

Daniel-Rops, Henri, *Daily Life In The Time Of Jesus*

### Some useful non-Catholic resources

*The Orthodox Study Bible*

Tyndale Commentary Series – useful for the Old Testament